

Michigan Groundwater Conservation Advisory Council
Meeting Summary
of
November 30, 2006
At the
Haldane Room on the 3rd Floor of the Amway Grand, Grand Rapids Michigan

Council Members

Jon Allan	Suhmed Bahl
Rich Bowman	Jim Cleland
James Clift	Jon Coleman
Michael Gregg	Kurt Heise
Fred Henningsen	Craig Hoffman
Rod Mersino	Thomas Newhof
Michael Newman	Bill Pearson
Scott Piggot	Dr. Paul Seelbach
Dr. Alan Steinman	

Guests

Jim Bredin MDEQ-OGL	Rochelle Breitenbach - Audubon
Patricia Fouche MDNR	Greg Fox –Perrier Group
Dave Hamilton MDEQ-LWMD	Rebecca Humphries MDNR
Rita Jack – Sierra Club	Tim Lundgren – Varnum Law
Dave Regalubo Golder	Frank Ruswick MDEQ
Gene Smary - WNJ	J D Snyder - IWR

Introductions / Meeting logistics

Representatives from the Michigan Farm Bureau and the Michigan Farm Bureau Natural & Environmental Resources Advisory Committee welcomed the Groundwater Advisory Council to the Amway Grand where the Annual Michigan Farm Bureau 2006 Achieving New Heights Seminar is being held. Informational flyers regarding the 2006 Event were distributed and an invitation was extended to all present to sit in on any of the meetings and to check out the Taste of Michigan Reception starting at 5:15 today. All those present introduced themselves.

DNR Perspective

Michigan Department of Natural Resources Director Rebecca Humphries spoke to the Groundwater Advisory Council. Director Humphries stated it was a privilege meeting those who are involved in this groundbreaking work. Michigan is blessed with much water. Ecosystems are very important and they need water. Director Humphries encouraged the council to use full range of tools available: i.e. GIS. She emphasized that the aquatic ecosystems must not be overlooked and is pleased that the current legislation states the importance of ecosystems. Director Humphries again thanked all of the council members for taking time to do this landmark work. Director Humphries accepted and answered questions.

Subcommittee Updates

1. Legal – James Clift

Mr. James Clift spoke about the discussions the legal subcommittee has had. Some of the topics have been: Use of the assessment tool must be inline with current law to enable the law. What does receiving a yellow / green light from screening tool mean to an applicant? What would be the role of water use committees: to help voluntarily resolve water issues, to plan for the future but take away no power from other offices. Mr. Clift expects to have a meeting in January but not yet scheduled.

2. Mitigation

Mike Newman has gotten the water discharge permits consisting of nearly 1,000 pages. His committee will review them - - looking at the past to help see into the future. Mr. Newman believes there should be some situations where mitigation should not be allowed. No date set for the next meeting.

3. Sustainability - Dr. Al Steinman

Dr. Alan Steinman gave an overview of what the sustainability committee has done to date. A Star Grant Proposal was written and submitted. The Star Grant was not approved so a new proposal was written. Financial support is being sought to cover the cost to pay for a facilitator, travel costs, and food. The new proposal would ask 30 experts. Dr. Steinman hopes to have funding by December. In January the committee plans to have all the meeting details done and all participants invited for an early April session.

4. Assessment Tool

A. Expert Panel – All arrangements have been put together. MSU made most of the arrangements. The Assessment Tool Subcommittee is most grateful for all the time and effort the MSU staff has put into getting the Expert Panel Meeting together.

The experts were sent information on the assessment screening tool asking them to help us move forward. There was a cover letter and a description of the assessment screening tool. The expert panelists are: Hal Beecher from Washington State and co-author of the Instream Flows for Riverine Resource Stewardship book. For information on Hal Beecher go to on <http://www.bio.fsu.edu/newsletter/feedback.html> or http://www.zoominfo.com/people/Beecher_Hal_15381565.aspx

Joe DiPinto a modeler. For information on Dr. DePinto go to <http://www.iaglr.org/as/awarddepinto.php>

N. Leroy Poff - Hydro-ecologist specialist. For information on Dr. Poff go to <http://rydberg.biology.colostate.edu/~poff>

W.W. Woessner a Professor of Hydrogeology from University of Wyoming. Dr. William K Annable was unable to attend. For information on W.W. Woessner go to <http://www.umt.edu/geosciences/faculty/woessner/woessner.htm>

The Monday December 11, 2006, from 8:30 am – 3:00 pm in Room 104 A&B in the Kellogg Center at 55 South Harrison, Michigan State University, East Lansing Michigan meeting will be very technical. The DNR Technical Advisory Committee will be attending. Since the Assessment Screening Tool is a very important charge the entire council is asked to attend. A written report will be requested but comments from the expert panelists are expected the second day, Tuesday, December 12 from 8:30 to Noon in Room 106 of the Kellogg Center. The Peer Review Meeting will be open to the public.

B. Assessment Tool Progress and Timeline

Dr. Paul Seelbach updated the committee on the progress of the assessment screening tool. The modeling group has been meeting every Friday. There are three pieces to the screening tool: 1) stream flow / regression 2) aquifer and 3) fish response model. After all three are done; they need to be GIS interfaced. The instream portions will be complete in to 3 or 4 weeks from now. The aquifer model is almost complete. The fish model is only about 25% along. The lead developer had open heart surgery and was off work for a month. Each team realizes they have a completion deadline for the end of December so by the end of January the assessment screening tool can be viewed / used by potential users.

C. Policy Knob Discussions

Jon Allan reminded all present that there are two aspects of tool: the technical and the policy. All models have uncertainty. A few of the policy knobs that decisions will need to be made involve: low flow / seasonality issues, stream flow / ecological lumping; how is return flow within a system or none handled.

D. Instream Flows for Riverine Resource Stewardship book order - 800-247-6553

Pat Fouchey reminded all present that they only have until Friday December 8th to take advantage of the Instream Flows for Riverine Resource Stewardship book for \$50 plus S&H.

Final Report

Jim Nicholas said in July he put out suggestions on what the report will look like. He distributed those suggestions at the August GWCAC Meeting. He has come back to get feedback on his suggestions.

Guiding Principles – Kurt Heise, Dr. Paul Seelbach

Jon Allen, Kurt Heise and Dr. Paul Seelbach lead a discussion on coming up with a list of guiding principles that correspond to the task given the committee. Before the January Meeting Jon Allen, Kurt Heise and Dr. Paul Seelbach will try to put in words what was discussed.

Next Meetings

Science Review Panel Meeting on December 11, 2006, 8:30 am – 3:00 pm in Room 104 A&B of the Kellogg Center on Michigan State University Campus at 55 South Harrison in East Lansing and on December 12, 2006, 8:30 to Noon Room 106 of the Kellogg Center on Michigan State University Campus at 55 South Harrison in East Lansing

Conference Call at 9:00 AM on December 19, 2006 to discuss any concerns. Participants are to call Jon Allan at 866-767-9256.

GWCAC Monthly Meeting - January 11, 2007, from 10:00 to 3:00 at the USGS in the Great Lakes Science Center at 1451 Green Road in Ann Arbor.

For February 13, 2007, from 10:00 to 3:00 in the Lansing Area

For March 20, 2007 from 10:00 are to 3:00 pm in the Wayne County Area. .